



# **Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)**

Call for proposals

**Circular Economy and Quality of Life - Standard Action  
Projects (SAP)**

**LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV**

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## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

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## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of Circular Economy and Quality of Life under the **Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2024/2509 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))<sup>1</sup>
- the basic act (LIFE Regulation [2021/783](#))<sup>2</sup>.

The call is launched in accordance with the 2025-2027 Multiannual Work Programme<sup>3</sup> and will be managed by the **European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)** ('Agency').

The call covers the following **topics**:

- **LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV-ENVIRONMENT - Circular Economy and Zero Pollution**
- **LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV-GOV - Environmental Governance**

Each project application under the call must address only one of these topics. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic, must submit a separate proposal under each topic.

We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call document](#) outlines the:
  - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
  - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
  - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
  - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
  - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
  - award criteria (section 9)
  - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
  - how to submit an application (section 11)

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024).

<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/783 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) (OJ L 172, 17.5.2021, p. 53).

<sup>3</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C(2025)955 of 15 April 2025 on the financing of the LIFE Programme and the adoption of the work programme for the years 2025 to 2027.

- the Online Manual outlines the:
  - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
  - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
  - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

You are also encouraged to visit the [LIFE database](#) to consult the list of projects funded previously. For the Clean Energy Transition sub-programme, projects funded previously (under the Horizon 2020 programme) can be found on the [CORDIS website](#).

## 1. Background

### What is the LIFE Programme?

The LIFE Programme is the EU Programme for Environment and Climate Action.

As such, it is one of the key contributors to the European Green Deal<sup>4</sup> which aims to:

- transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use and
- protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment and climate related risks and impacts.

The LIFE Programme will contribute to these priorities through its four sub-programmes in particular by:

- boosting and integrating the implementation of the EU's policy objectives for halting and reversing loss of wildlife habitats and species across all sectors
- supporting the transition to a circular economy and protecting and improving the quality of EU's natural resources, including air, soil and water among others
- supporting implementation of the 2030 energy and climate policy framework, the EU's climate neutrality objective by 2050, and the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change and
- building capacity, stimulating investments and supporting implementation of policies focused on energy efficiency and small-scale renewables.

The LIFE Programme is structured in two fields and four sub-programmes (described in more detail below):

Environment:

- sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity
- sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of Life

Climate Action:

- sub-programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- sub-programme Clean Energy Transition.

### Nature and Biodiversity

In line with the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme as set out in Article 3(2) of the LIFE Regulation, the sub-programme "Nature and Biodiversity" aims:

- to develop, demonstrate, promote and stimulate the scale up of innovative techniques, methods and approaches (including nature-based solutions and ecosystem approaches) for reaching the objectives set out under the Union legislation and policy on or related to nature and biodiversity, and to contribute to

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<sup>4</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The European Green Deal (COM (2019)640 final).

the knowledge base and to the application of best practices, including through the support of the Natura 2000 network;

- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the relevant Union legislation and policy on or related to nature and biodiversity, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing the capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society, also taking into due consideration the possible contributions provided by citizen science<sup>5</sup>;
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful solutions/approaches for implementing relevant Union legislation and policy on nature and biodiversity, by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

LIFE has been a key tool supporting the implementation of the EU Birds<sup>6</sup> and Habitats<sup>7</sup> Directives since 1992 and has been instrumental and, in some cases crucial, to ensure the establishment of the Natura 2000 network.

The Nature Directives' fitness check<sup>8</sup>, the Action plan for nature, people, and the economy<sup>9</sup> as well as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030<sup>10</sup> underline the need to increase funding for nature and biodiversity.

The sub-programme covers two priority areas:

- 1) EU Nature and Biodiversity,
- 2) Awareness raising, compliance assurance and access to justice related to nature and biodiversity legislation.

### Circular Economy and Quality of Life

The specific objectives of the sub-programme "Circular Economy and Quality of Life" are:

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of Union legislation and policy on environment, and to contribute to the knowledge base and, where relevant, to the application of best practices;
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislation and policy on environment, including by improving

<sup>5</sup> Scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with or under the direction of professional scientists and scientific institutions.

<sup>6</sup> Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7)

<sup>7</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

<sup>8</sup> Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2016) 472 final of 16 December 2016 'Fitness-check of the EU Nature Legislation (Birds and Habitats Directives) Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds and Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora' (hereinafter referred to as 'the Fitness-check of the Birds and Habitats Directives').

<sup>9</sup> Communication COM(2017) 198 final of 27 April 2017 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'An Action Plan for nature, people and the economy'.

<sup>10</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'The European Green Deal' (COM/2019/640 final).



governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society;

- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing relevant Union legislation and policy on environment, by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

This sub-programme covers three priority areas:

- 1) Circular economy and waste,
- 2) Zero pollution and sustainable management of natural resources
- 3) Environmental governance.

This sub-programme aims at facilitating the transition toward a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy, a toxic-free environment and at protecting, restoring and improving the quality of the environment in line with the European Green Deal and recent policy developments.

### *Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation*

The specific objectives of the sub-programme “Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation” are:

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of Union legislation and policy on climate action and to contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practices;
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislation and policy on climate action, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society;
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing relevant Union legislation and policy on climate action by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

The sub-programme “Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation” will support the implementation of the European Green Deal by contributing to the objectives and targets set out in the European Climate Law<sup>11</sup>: the goal for Europe’s economy and society to become climate-neutral by 2050; the intermediate Union climate target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% compared to 1990 levels by 2030; the 2040 Union climate target that the Commission should propose within six months of the first global stock take carried out under the Paris Agreement<sup>12</sup>; and the obligation for the relevant Union institutions and the Member States to ensure continuous progress in enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and

<sup>11</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 (‘European Climate Law’), OJ L 243, 9.7.2021, p. 1–17.

<sup>12</sup> On 6 February 2024, the Commission recommended reducing the EU’s net greenhouse gas emissions by 90% by 2040 relative to 1990 in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions ‘Securing our future - Europe’s 2040 climate target and path to climate neutrality by 2050 building a sustainable, just and prosperous society’, COM/2024/63 final.

reducing vulnerability to climate change, in line with the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change<sup>13</sup>.

The sub-programme has three priority areas:

1. Climate Change Mitigation,
2. Climate Change Adaptation,
3. Climate Change Governance and Information.

### Clean Energy Transition

The specific objectives of the sub-programme "Clean Energy Transition" are the following:

- to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative regulatory, governance and market-oriented techniques, methods and approaches for reaching the objectives of Union legislation and policy on the clean, sustainable and just energy transition by upscaling renewable energy solutions and increasing energy efficiency, and contributing to the knowledge base and to the application of best practices;
- to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of relevant Union legislation and policy on the clean, sustainable, and just energy transition upscaling renewable energy solutions and increasing energy efficiency, including by improving governance at all levels, by enhancing capacities of public and private actors, by assisting and engaging citizens and the involvement of civil society, and by structuring the market to enable and foster the uptake of energy transition technologies;
- to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions supporting cross-European actions integrating market and regulatory approaches able to favour the implementation of relevant Union legislation and objectives on the clean, sustainable, and just energy transition upscaling renewable energy solutions and increasing energy efficiency, by replicating results and successful best practices, by mobilising investment, upscaling the use of financial instruments and improving access to finance, and by fostering cross-sectoral business cooperations, public-private partnerships and activities of EU cross-border market actors.

The sub-programme Clean Energy Transition aims at facilitating the transition toward an energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and -resilient economy by funding mainly Coordination and Support Actions (CSA). These actions aim at capacity building, at dissemination of information and of knowledge, and at awareness-raising to support the transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency. They support breaking market barriers that hamper the socio-economic transition to sustainable energy, typically engaging multiple small and medium-size stakeholders, including but not limited to local and regional public authorities, non-profit organisations, energy services companies and utilities, project developers, net-zero technologies manufacturers, financial institutions, professional organisations, consumers associations and citizens initiatives.

The sub-programme Clean Energy Transition covers the following priority areas of intervention:

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<sup>13</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change', COM/2021/82 final.

1. Building a national, regional and local policy framework supporting the clean energy transition
2. Accelerating technology roll-out, digitalisation, new services and business models and enhancement of the related professional skills on the market for the clean energy transition
3. Attracting private finance for sustainable energy
4. Supporting the development of local and regional investment projects
5. Involving and empowering citizens in the clean energy transition

## **2. Type of action — Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact**

### Type of action

The topics under this call for proposals concern LIFE Standard Action Projects (SAPs).

SAPs represent the 'traditional LIFE projects' aimed to:

- develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques, methods and approaches  
*'Innovative techniques, methods and approaches'* means solutions which are new when compared to the state of the art at national and sector level and which are implemented at an operational scale and under conditions that allow the achievement of the impacts set out in the award criterion 'Impact' first paragraph (*see below*).
- contribute to the knowledge base and to the application of best practice  
*'Best practice'* means solutions, techniques, methods and approaches which are appropriate, cost-effective and state of the art (at national and sector level), and which are implemented at an operational scale and under conditions that allow the achievement of the impacts set out in the award criterion 'Impact' first paragraph (*see below*).
- support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the EU legislation and policy, including by improving governance at all levels, in particular through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society
- catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy related solutions for implementing the EU legislation and policy by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

SAPs are a flexible tool available to entities from all sectors (public, non-governmental and private).

They can be close-to-market (i.e. aim not only at delivering improved environmental solutions, but also at making sure such solutions are widely taken up by society in general and, more particularly, by the economy through an explicit market-oriented approach). In this case, applicants will be required to highlight specific market-related information in their Application Forms (*e.g. planned production capacity, reference market, economic feasibility etc.*).

Applications for SAPs are typically expected under the sub-programme 'Circular Economy and Quality of Life', 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation' and 'Clean Energy Transition'.

## **LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV-ENVIRONMENT - Circular Economy and Zero Pollution**

### Objectives

The aim is to facilitate the transition toward a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy, a toxic-free environment and at protecting, restoring and improving the quality of the environment in line with the European Green Deal and recent policy developments.

The specific objective is to cover one or more of the following topics (the description is further detailed in the sections afterwards):

1. Circular Economy and Waste
  - 1.1. Recovery of Resources from Waste
  - 1.2. Circular Economy and the Environment
2. Zero pollution and sustainable management of natural resources
  - 2.1. Air
  - 2.2. Water
  - 2.3. Soil
  - 2.4. Noise
  - 2.5. Chemicals
  - 2.6. Industrial Emissions and Safety
  - 2.7. A new European Bauhaus

Please note that the assessment of the extent to which the project is in line with the specific priorities of the call (part of Award criterion 1) will be done **exclusively on the basis of the topics identified and described under section 'Compliance with LIFE programme objectives and call topic' of the Standard application form.** Please also note **that a maximum of two sub-topics shall be selected** (e.g.: Air quality improvement and emission reduction of PM.... solutions AND Sustainable road transport mobility) **and only those will be considered in the evaluation.**

### *1. CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND WASTE*

A circular economy and reduction of waste are core objectives of European environmental policy and have been reinforced through the European Green Deal. In March 2020, the European Commission proposed a new Circular Economy Action Plan<sup>14</sup> resulting in many proposals for updates or new legislation, including on sustainable batteries, waste shipments, sustainable products, empowerment of consumers, revised rules for construction products, the promotion of the repair of goods, rules on green claims, and revised EU rules on packaging and packaging waste. The European Commission also revised the circular economy monitoring framework and published in 2022 a progress report of the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy & Action Plan. New

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<sup>14</sup> [COM\(2020\) 98 final](#).

rules of sustainable batteries<sup>15</sup>, waste shipments<sup>16</sup> and Ecodesign requirements<sup>17</sup> have been adopted. An agreement in respect of packaging was reached. In the future, batteries have a low carbon footprint, use minimal harmful substances, need less raw materials from non-EU countries, and are collected, reused, and recycled to a high degree in Europe. Export of plastic waste from the EU to non-OECD countries will normally be prohibited.

Under the priority area “circular economy and waste” The LIFE Programme aims at supporting these new priorities through innovative projects and best practices under the following priority topics. Priority is given to proposals addressing a maximum of two of the following topics.

### 1.1. Recovery of Resources from Waste

Priority is given to proposals addressing:

1. Implementing innovative solutions to **support the roll-out of value-added<sup>18</sup> recycled materials**, components, or products for the following areas:
  - a) Separate collection, disassembly, treatment and recycling of electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), in particular but not limited to photovoltaic panels, smartphones, tablets and computers;
  - b) Separate collection, and recycling of batteries and accumulators;
  - c) Dismantling, remanufacturing and recycling of End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs) and End-of-Life Ships;
  - d) Selective collection and recycling of materials used in buildings and construction;
  - e) Sorting and recycling of plastics<sup>19</sup>;
  - f) Separate collection and recycling of bio-waste<sup>20</sup>;
  - g) Separate collection, preparation for re-use and recycling of textiles, including mattresses and footwear;
  - h) Recycling of composite and multilayer materials in particular but not limited to carbon or glass fibres;
  - i) Recovering and/or reusing of critical raw materials from waste;
  - j) Sorting and recycling of packaging;
2. Implementing innovative solutions for the **identification<sup>21</sup>, tracking, separation, prevention, and decontamination of waste containing hazardous substances**, to enable: (1) value-added recycling of the treated

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<sup>15</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2023/1542 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2023 concerning batteries and waste batteries, amending Directive 2008/98/EC and Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1020 and repealing Directive 2006/66/EC.](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1157 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on shipments of waste, amending Regulations \(EU\) No 1257/2013 and \(EU\) 2020/1056 and repealing Regulation \(EC\) No 1013/2006.](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1781 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for sustainable products, amending Directive \(EU\) 2020/1828 and Regulation \(EU\) 2023/1542 and repealing Directive 2009/125/EC.](#)

<sup>18</sup> Value added refers to recycling into high quality products. For the concept see: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions ‘Towards a circular economy: [A zero waste programme for Europe. COM\(2014\) 398 final.](#)

<sup>19</sup> This includes plastic packaging and micro-plastic.

<sup>20</sup> Including anaerobic digestion and composting.

<sup>21</sup> Including characterisation and product passport approaches.

waste and safe disposal of the hazardous substances, or (2) a reduction in the scale of the problem. Special attention should be given to those substances considered as the most harmful for the environment and human health, also known as substances of concern<sup>22</sup>. We invite applicants to pay particular attention to asbestos and other hazardous substances from demolition waste.

## 1.2. Circular Economy and the Environment

Priority is given to proposals addressing the following:

1. The implementation of business and consumption models, systems, or solutions<sup>23</sup> to support value chains<sup>24</sup>, including bio-based ones<sup>25</sup>, particularly the key product value chains set out in the new EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy<sup>26</sup>, aiming at **reducing or preventing resource use and waste**<sup>27</sup>.
2. Implementation and application of **new models for improved extended producer responsibility schemes**, including eco-modulation of fees.
3. Implementation of **designs and plans that mitigate environmental impacts**, at unit or societal level. This can include circular design to increase the lifetime of products/units, for example through improved durability, reparability, reusability, upgradability, and to enable recycling and use of recycled content in new products or the use of sustainable biobased materials to replace fossil-based materials in new products. These designs and plans shall aim at reducing impacts holistically<sup>28</sup> by considering aspects such as: life cycle approach, wide uptake of labelling, green procurement and tracking of raw materials in components and end-user products.
4. Solutions (post-design) to support the implementation, transfer and/or uptake of **product durability**, reuse and repair, including upgrading, remanufacturing and the development of (digital) platforms aimed at extending the lifespan of products to facilitate their repairing, refurbishment, reuse and resale.

<sup>22</sup> Substances having a chronic effect for human health or the environment (Candidate list in REACH and Annex VI to the CLP Regulation) but also those which hamper recycling for safe and high quality secondary raw materials.

<sup>23</sup> Circular districts involving creation of circular value chains to boost urban economies whilst producing urban and territorial regeneration will be as well considered.

<sup>24</sup> This also included bio-based value chains. See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions ‘A sustainable Bioeconomy for Europe: Strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment’ (COM/2018/673 final)

<sup>25</sup> See also Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions ‘A sustainable Bioeconomy for Europe: Strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment’ ([COM/2018/673 final](#))

<sup>26</sup> A new circular economy action plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe, COM/2020/98 final. The action plan present the following key product value chains: Packaging, Electronics and ICT, Batteries and Vehicles, Plastics, Textiles, Construction and building, Food, Water and nutrients.

<sup>27</sup> The projects dealing in particular with waste prevention, should, as part of their actions and where relevant, involve citizens, through information and awareness on: a) the environmental performance associated with proposed solution throughout its life cycle (to encourage more informed purchases), b) the return, collection and recovery systems available and with respect to the meaning of the labels related to ecological performance and recycling affixed on the products.

<sup>28</sup> If the concept requires to apply life cycle assessment, projects have to use the Product Environmental Footprint method. The method is an annex to the [Commission Recommendation 2013/179/EU](#) and is expected to be updated through policy based on the version [https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/PEF\\_method.pdf](https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/PEF_method.pdf).

5. Solutions to support the **reduction of single-use products** and increase of reusable products.
6. Support to the implementation, transfer and/or uptake of one or more of the following **solutions**:
  - a) Circular business models and practices that promote value retention, limit overproduction, reduce single-use products, optimise product, asset and resource use, including product-as-a-service solutions.
  - b) Implementation of approaches to increase the demand for secondary raw materials, including through market instruments and incorporation of recycled materials in new products.
  - c) Industrial symbiosis and creation of circular value chains, better tracking resources and matching surplus or by-product materials or recyclable waste across industrial sectors.
  - d) Application of the Digital Product Passport to enable circular value-retention and optimisation actions, particularly in priority intermediary and end-use product groups<sup>29</sup> based on the reinforcement of knowledge of the value chains for groups of priority products.

The models and/or solutions proposed should ideally consider the environmental performance of the whole value chain<sup>30</sup>, but can equally focus on any specific stage and/or resource (e.g. the water footprint) in the value chain<sup>31</sup>. Particular attention should be given to the involvement and active participation of SMEs.

Priority will be given to projects that minimise or eliminate environmental impact, without simply shifting negative impacts elsewhere or to other stages of the product lifecycle.

## 2. ZERO POLLUTION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES<sup>32</sup>

As part of the European Green Deal, and follow up to the Zero Pollution Action Plan, the European Commission proposed many actions to support zero pollution and the sustainable management of natural resources. These include a revision of the Industrial Emissions Directive<sup>33</sup>, a revision of the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register, a revision of the Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air Directive<sup>34</sup> and proposals to reduce microplastics pollution. Even though, negotiations between co-legislators are ongoing, reinforced rules in these areas can be expected.

<sup>29</sup> The EU Digital Product Passport will, as part of the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation, oblige products to have a scannable data carrier, and for those placing them on the market to make certain data relating to circularity and sustainability available via that data carrier. The objective is to enable circular actions on a B2B, B2C and B2G basis that has previously been impeded by lack of data. Priority product groups will be first in line for delegated acts to establish such requirements.

<sup>30</sup> This is directly reflecting the Sustainable Development Goal #12, which calls for sustainable consumption and production patterns. [The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provided a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, at its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

<sup>31</sup> Projects may include, as an element, the development of data to support value chain thinking. For the development of data on the environmental impacts of different processes, to test the impact of alternative solutions, please refer to previous footnote 31 on Product Environmental Footprint method for life cycle related data.

<sup>32</sup> Except nature and biodiversity included in the Sub-programme nature and biodiversity.

<sup>33</sup> [Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial emissions \(integrated pollution prevention and control\)](#)

<sup>34</sup> [Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe](#)



The LIFE Programme supports innovative solutions to reduce pollution in air, water, soil as well as reduction in exposure to noise, chemicals and industrial emissions. In the priority area “zero pollution and sustainable management of natural resources”, priority is given to proposals addressing a maximum of two of the following topics.

## 2.1. Air

Projects under this thematic priority should reinforce the implementation of air quality legislation and the National Emission reduction Commitments under the NEC Directive<sup>35</sup>. Projects should refer to reducing air pollutants, particularly particulate matter (PM), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), and/or ammonia. If reducing emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is the primary objective, the projects should be submitted under the sub-programme for Climate Mitigation and Adaptation.

Where not explicitly stated otherwise, air quality projects should generally focus on urban areas, or on approaches for rural areas with a large replicability potential in the EU, in order to cover as many people as possible.

Priority is given to the proposals targeting the following:

### 1. **Air quality improvement and emission reduction of PM** in areas:

- a) with high use of solid fuel like biomass, coal, and peat for domestic heating, or
- b) with high emissions of PM from (re)construction, quarrying, mining, mineral handling, or other dust generating activities, if not covered by the Industrial Emissions Directive, under the condition that they implement one or more of the following:
  - technical<sup>36</sup>,
  - management,
  - innovative regulatory and/or
  - innovative incentive-based solutions<sup>37</sup>.

### 2. **Sustainable road transport mobility** aiming at reducing emissions of air pollutants whose reduction is essential to meet air quality standards and focusing on one or more of the following:

- a) reduction of emissions of air pollutants during real world driving conditions (e.g. technical measures for vehicles, eco-driving, measurement and surveillance technology);
- b) zero-emission two or three wheelers and/or analysis for and implementation on a test scale of related infrastructure needs;
- c) zero-emission vehicles and related infrastructure needs;
- d) innovative use of alternative fuels;
- e) innovative retrofit programmes for vehicles<sup>38</sup>;

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<sup>35</sup> [Directive \(EU\) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing Directive 2001/81/EC.](#)

<sup>36</sup> E.g., fuel pre-treatment, ultra-low dust technologies, high efficiency and clean combustion and control technologies, combinations with no-emission renewable energy, heat storage, lower emission fuel options.

<sup>37</sup> Please note that the direct payment of incentives in the form of financial support to third parties is subject to restrictions according to the requirements set in the LIFE model Grant Agreement.

<sup>38</sup> Products envisaged include cars as well as motorised two-wheelers and three-wheelers.

- f) alternative drivetrain technology<sup>39</sup>;
  - g) innovative technologies to reduce emissions from wear and tear (e.g., brakes, tyres, road surface);
  - h) high-impact traffic access systems (such as Low and Zero Emission Zones and road pricing schemes) through advanced access criteria and/or labels, e.g., promoting zero-emission vehicles. Priority will be given to projects in urban areas in order to improve the situation for a maximum number of persons;
  - i) the use of innovative logistic or passenger mobility platforms<sup>40</sup>;
  - j) innovative solutions to implement and increase low emission transport modes and alternatives such as active mobility (e.g., walking, cycling).
3. **Sustainable mobility, other than road transport**, including maritime transport, ports, aviation, and Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) mobility<sup>41</sup>, including their supporting infrastructure and logistics, propulsion and/or cargo<sup>42</sup>.
4. **Reduction of ammonia, non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC), methane and PM emissions from agriculture** in support of the implementation of the UNECE Code of Good Practice for reducing emissions from agriculture<sup>43</sup> and for the emission reduction objectives in Directive 2016/2284<sup>44</sup>.

## 2.2. Water

Taking into account the ongoing revision of EU water legislation, including the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive<sup>45</sup> and the legislation on water pollutants<sup>46</sup>, the focus of water actions, both legislative and non-legislative, will be on **increasing “water resilience”**, i.e., our capacity to warrant safe, clean and affordable water for all, while protecting against the wider ecological, economic and social impacts of droughts and flood risks. It involves the **integrated freshwater resource management** as regards both quality and quantity management, as well as the management of coastal, transitional and marine waters and increasing the capacity, the quality and robustness of water services. These themes are detailed in sub-sections below. The priorities are

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<sup>39</sup> As for example electro-mobility and hydrogen-based mobility.

<sup>40</sup> E.g., for last mile delivery of goods or urban intermodal passenger mobility.

<sup>41</sup> If aiming at reducing emissions from NRMM, projects can address existing NRMM not covered by Regulation (EU) 2016/162823, and/or address improvements to reduce emissions from NRMM already covered by the NRMM Regulation beyond the legal requirements mentioned in it.

<sup>42</sup> E.g., for cargo: avoiding leakages of air pollutants or dangerous substances into the atmosphere, degassing.

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41358>.

<sup>44</sup> [Directive \(EU\) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing Directive 2001/81/EC](#).

<sup>45</sup> [Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning urban wastewater treatment \(recast\) \(COM\(2022\) 541 final\)](#).

<sup>46</sup> [Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration and Directive 2008/105/EC on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy \(COM\(2022\) 540 final\)](#).

also inspired by the European Union’s “List of voluntary commitments for the Water Action Agenda,” as presented at the UN 2023 Water Conference<sup>47</sup>.

Priority will be given to proposals targeting the following:

1. Integrated approaches for the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive<sup>48</sup>;
2. Actions targeted at the implementation of the Floods Directive<sup>49</sup>;
3. Actions targeted at the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive<sup>50</sup>, including a better alignment with the parallel implementation of the Water Framework Directive<sup>51</sup>;
4. Actions aiming at improving collection and treating of wastewater, moving towards energy and climate neutrality in urban wastewater management in line with the Commission proposal on Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive<sup>52</sup>;
5. Activities to ensure safe and efficient use of water resources, including for energy production, irrigation, and for protecting nature and biodiversity, for improving the monitoring of freshwater quality and quantity, for improving quantitative and qualitative water management, for higher water reuse, and for a preserved or restored high quality of water. This could be done through nature-based solutions for flood risk management; sustainable agricultural, aquacultural and forestry practices that enhance water management; as well as actions aimed at abating or avoiding water pollution, and avoiding misuse and deterioration of water resources;

The following sections elaborate the overall rationale of “water resilience” and the priorities listed above through addressing the specific challenges related to water quantity and quality, marine and coastal water management and water services respectively.

### 2.2.1. Water quality & quantity

Addressing water quality and quantity issues in a cost-efficient way is a challenge within the EU, exacerbated by the need to adapt to a changing climate. Responding to the challenges and opportunities in the water sector requires a holistic approach across several actors.

In line with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, including its daughter Directives and Regulation<sup>53</sup>, and of the Flood Directive, projects should focus on developing and particularly implementing actions that can help Member States move to genuinely integrated water resource management, thus contributing to meeting the overall environmental objectives of both Directives. Such actions may help improving

<sup>47</sup> See [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/eu-efforts-global-water-agenda-beyond-un-2023-water-conference\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/eu-efforts-global-water-agenda-beyond-un-2023-water-conference_en), including the “List of voluntary commitments for the Water Action Agenda presented by the European Union for the UN 2023 Water Conference (New York, 22-24 March 2023)”.

<sup>48</sup> [Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy.](#)

<sup>49</sup> [Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks.](#)

<sup>50</sup> [Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy \(Marine Strategy Framework Directive\).](#)

<sup>51</sup> [Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000](#)

<sup>52</sup> [Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive - 91/271.](#)

<sup>53</sup> Groundwater Directive (Directive 2006/118/EC), Environmental Quality Standards Directive (Directive 2008/105/EC) and Water Reuse Regulation (Regulation 2020/741).

monitoring water use and water pollution, reducing pressures on water quality and quantity, including through promoting nature-based solutions and sustainable agricultural, aquacultural and forestry practices that enhance water management and support the EU Biodiversity Strategy where relevant.

As regards the implementation of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, the Regulation on Water Use<sup>54</sup>, as well as the revised Drinking Water Directive<sup>55</sup>, the actions should bring to maturity the available new technologies and processes that aim to ensure the cost effective provision of these water services in the context of adapting to the climate change effects on water availability (i.e., to the production of high quality drinking water and to improved treatment of wastewater in a close to energy-neutral manner and compatible with resource extraction and water reuse).

Priority is given to proposals contributing to:

1. The improvement of water quality via one or both of the following:
  - a) Integrated management of nutrients and organic pollution of human (urban) and/or agricultural origin through directly removing the pollution at source (prevention), at treatment plant level or in the water bodies (remediation). The foreseen solutions should be innovative and they should be identified as a measure in the River Basin Management Plan, either at a river basin scale or catchment scale, as part of the set of measures aimed at meeting the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive in a cost-effective manner, taking into account what has been delivered via the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive<sup>56</sup>, Nitrates Directive<sup>57</sup>, Bathing Water Directive<sup>58</sup> and Groundwater Directive<sup>59</sup> requirements.
  - b) Innovative solutions for the reduction of the pressures from chemical pollutants, including their combined effects in aquatic environments, through reducing at source the emissions of priority substances<sup>60</sup>, and other chemicals identified as river basin specific pollutants under the risk assessments carried out under the Drinking Water Directive, through the use of appropriate substitutes<sup>61</sup> or alternative technologies. This should include, where relevant, other pollutants of emerging concern such as pharmaceuticals, PFASs, pesticides, endocrine disruptors and (micro) plastics.
2. The implementation of flood and/or water scarcity and drought risk management actions (see also above point 3. under chapter 1.1.2 of the

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<sup>54</sup> [Water Reuse Regulation - Regulation 2020/741 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 2020](#)

<sup>55</sup> [Directive \(EU\) 2020/2184 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on the quality of water intended for human consumption](#)

<sup>56</sup> Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 on urban waste-water treatment.

<sup>57</sup> Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 on the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources.

<sup>58</sup> [Directive 2006/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 February 2006 on the management of bathing water quality and repealing Directive 76/160/EEC.](#)

<sup>59</sup> [Directive 2006/118/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration.](#)

<sup>60</sup> [Directive 2013/39/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 August 2013 amending Directives 2000/60/EC and 2008/105/EC as regards priority substances in the field of water policy.](#)

<sup>61</sup> 'Appropriate substitutes' are other chemical substances, which produce the same desired effects with a reduced environmental impact.

Nature and Biodiversity sub-programme) and the future integrated management plans under the future revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive by applying at least one of the following:

- a) Nature-based solutions consisting in natural water retention measures that increase the storage and infiltration of water in the soil and remove pollutants through natural or “natural like” processes including the re-naturalisation of river, lake, estuary and coastal morphology and/or the re-creation of associated habitats, including flood- and marsh plains;
  - b) Sustainable Drainage Systems in urban areas as well as solutions to deal with storm overflows and urban runoff;
  - c) Innovative tools and approaches to optimise the management and operation of the existing infrastructure in line with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive based on digital solutions allowing to better track water quantities and quality in the collection and storage networks as discharges released through storm water overflows;
  - d) Innovative integrated risk assessment and management approaches taking into account social vulnerability and aiming at improved resilience while ensuring social acceptance.
3. The reduction of hydro-morphological pressures originating from land or water uses as identified in River Basin Management Plans, in order to achieve good water status or potential as required by the Water Framework Directive objectives and to attain the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. This could include projects working on development of sediment transport management techniques and solutions, ensuring ecological flow, removal of obstacles, etc. Projects should apply at least one of the following:
- a) The implementation of innovative water saving measures in order to reduce the quantitative and qualitative pressures on water bodies/resources in line with the revised Drinking Water Directive. This includes measures for the assessment of water leakages due to the supply network and their reduction, as well as the reduction of over-abstraction of water taking into account circular economy approaches, and measures addressing at the same time one of the priority topics under soil (see 2.2.3);
  - b) The implementation of integrated actions aiming at the integrated management of water quality and quantities in cities in line with the proposal on the revision of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive;
  - c) The implementation of innovative solutions to reduce the energy use in the urban wastewater treatment plants with to the ultimate goal of reaching energy neutrality of the sanitation sector in line with the proposal on the revision of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, and to increase the production of renewables;
  - d) The implementation of innovative measures and best practices in the Drought Management Plans. They could address disruptions in the “green water cycle,” such as approaches to include vital nature areas into a water allocation mechanism, as well as measures focused on restoring the natural water retention of soil and vegetation (in nature

areas or agricultural area). Alternatively, it could be about coordinating water demand among different sectors (e.g., agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry, aquaculture, energy) with a view of handling potential water shortages and therefore contributing to the shift from reactive to proactive drought management.

### 2.2.2. Marine and coastal water management

Priority is given to proposals targeting the application of innovative solutions to **ensure the protection and conservation of the seas, oceans and their coasts**, by fostering sustainable human activities within the marine environment including, where relevant, by incorporating the use of remote sensing and satellite data (e.g., from Copernicus).

Regarding proposals targeted at the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive<sup>62</sup>, particular emphasis should be placed on reducing the main pressures and impacts, as well as actions applying the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive<sup>63</sup>, leading to strengthening an ecosystem-based approach in coastal zone management and maritime spatial planning and co-existence between nature and human activities at sea.

This includes, for example, initiatives aimed at reducing the pressure of human activities on the marine environment, and addressing at least one of the following topics of high concern:

1. underwater noise,
2. marine litter and/or contaminants (addressed at source or in the sea – giving priority to prevention rather than clean-up),
3. disturbance of and damage to the sea floor (including damage from brine discharges from desalination plants),
4. examination and reduction of impacts of deep-sea exploitation and exploration,
5. over-fishing and/or incidental by-catch,
6. nutrient and organic matter inputs from agriculture or aquaculture,
7. navigation (e.g., from dredging navigation channels, from shipping highways);
8. impacts of offshore renewable energy, in particular offshore wind energy.

### 2.2.3. Water services

As regards the implementation of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, the Regulation on the minimum requirements for water reuse<sup>64</sup>, as well as the revised Drinking Water Directive, the actions should bring to maturity the available new technologies and processes that aim to **ensure the cost-effective provision of these water services** in the context of adapting to the climate change effects on water availability (i.e. to the production of high quality drinking water and to improved treatment of wastewater in a close to energy-neutral manner and compatible with resource extraction and water reuse).

Proposals on the following topics are given priority:

1. Application of innovative technologies and tools for drinking water and urban wastewater treatment systems, through at least one of the following:

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<sup>62</sup> [Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy \(Marine Strategy Framework Directive\)](#)

<sup>63</sup> [Directive 2014/89/EU - Maritime Spatial Planning](#)

<sup>64</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2020/741 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 2020 on minimum requirements for water reuse](#)

- a) the use of resource efficient processes for the provision of water services<sup>65</sup>;
  - b) the use of processes to diminish the presence of pollutants of emerging concern;
  - c) the treatment of wastewater for reuse that can ensure highest safety levels, e.g., treatment efficacy for pathogen (viruses, bacteria) removal.
2. Application of innovative tools ensuring the efficient and sustainable provision of water services compliant with the revised Drinking Water Directive and the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive to population living in rural areas<sup>66</sup>.
  3. Application of innovative solutions, implementing one or more of the following:
    - a) Concepts for (alternative) water supply, wastewater treatment, water reuse (where applicable, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2020/741<sup>67</sup> on minimum requirements for water reuse), and for the recovery and recycling of resources (including critical raw materials and the recovery of valuable minerals, metals, and acids from desalination brine while concurrently minimising the damage to marine ecosystems)<sup>68</sup>;
    - b) Source control methods and on-site technologies for decreased discharges of pollutants of emerging concern (e.g., pharmaceuticals, nanoparticles, textile fibres) and/or pathogens with wastewater effluent;
    - c) Systematic approaches to avoid loss of water, energy, and resources in industrial production and/or in provision of water services.
  4. Implementation of sustainable water management solutions for private businesses, specific sectors, national/regional/local authorities based on water footprint assessments.

### 2.3. Soil

Healthy soils and soils organisms are crucial for our food systems, water regulation, nutrient cycles, biodiversity, climate change mitigation and resilience to droughts and other natural disasters. Taking into account the ongoing negotiations on the proposal for a Soil Monitoring Law, the LIFE Programme will give priority to the following proposals:

1. Implementing actions to **maintain or enhance soil health**, including innovative actions to address one or more of the following:
  - a) encourage the transition to sustainable soil management and promote, scale-up and implement innovative soil management practices and techniques to prevent and restore soil degradation (salinisation, erosion, loss of soil organic carbon, compaction, excess nutrients, contamination,

<sup>65</sup> E.g. aiming to reduce energy consumption for the treatment and management of water and water losses.

<sup>66</sup> Population living in rural areas is the population living outside urban areas. Urban areas are identified through the following method: 1. a population density threshold (300 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>) applied to grid cells of 1 km<sup>2</sup>; 2. a minimum size threshold (5,000 inhabitants) applied to grouped grid cells above the density threshold. For more information see: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Urban-rural\\_typology](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Urban-rural_typology) .

<sup>67</sup> [Regulation on Minimum requirements for water reuse - 2020/741](#)

<sup>68</sup> E.g., land nutrients (P, K, N) and organic compounds.

water filtration and reduction of water retention capacity, acidification, loss of soil biodiversity, land take and sealing) and to protect the capacity of the soil to provide ecosystem services and/or;

- b) prepare and respond to extreme weather events, drought, heat, wildfires, and floods in order to increase resilience of soils to climate-related threats by scaling-up the implementation of nature-based solutions and sustainable soil management practices that enhance water retention, nutrient availability, soil structure, soil biodiversity and carbon sequestration and/or;
- c) mitigate and reverse desertification through integrated water and land management, the implementation of practices tackling soil and land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, and the development of better land use planning;
- d) ensure food security and safety in the long-term and increase the resilience of the EU food system by promoting and scaling up innovative solutions to secure soil fertility, natural pest resistance and nutritional food quality while applying sustainable soil management and/or;
- e) protect human health and well-being by ensuring that soils can continue to provide safe and nutritious food, filter contaminants, reduce heat, preserve water quality, and support nature, green infrastructure and biodiversity.

2. Addressing the **restoration, protection and improvement of soil health and prevention of soil degradation** including soil loss also through innovative actions to:

- a) apply cost-effective investigation and remediation solutions for point-source and diffuse soil contamination of contaminated sites;
- b) facilitate the certification of soil health, support the exploitation of soil health data for other certification systems (e.g., carbon removal certification) and the payments for ecosystem services provided by healthy soil;
- c) apply cost-effective solutions to unseal already sealed areas.

Proposal focusing on soil are encouraged to apply in their monitoring solutions to monitor and assess soil health (and particularly soil biodiversity) in a cost-efficient manner (e.g., through remote sensing, modelling, artificial intelligence, digital sensors, etc.) and to collect, analyse and present soil health data in georeferenced format.

#### 2.4. Noise

In order to improve the situation for a maximum number of persons, priority is given to projects targeting a **substantial reduction of noise inside densely populated urban areas** through solutions with high environmental and economic sustainability. Examples include the use of low noise surfaces and/or tyres having life cycle costs comparable to those of standard surfaces and/or tyres, low height barriers with low landscape impact and eco-friendly materials, or lowering noise from railway traffic or airports. Another priority is the reduction of noise and vibration which could be harmful



for human health and/or ecosystems on land and/or in water, e.g., noise and vibrations from wind turbines.

## 2.5. Chemicals

In line with the EU's Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability Towards a Toxic-Free Environment<sup>69</sup> and follow-up actions, in the area of chemicals proposals are given priority if they address:

1. Prevention and reduction of the impact on the environment or human health of hazardous substances, in particular at least one of the following:
  - a) substances of Very High Concern (SVHC) or substances that fulfil the criteria for SVHCs (including endocrine disruptors and persistent substances)<sup>70</sup>;
  - b) combination effects of substances;
  - c) nanomaterials;
  - d) biocidal products and/or plant protection products;
  - e) per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS);
  - f) substitution of SVHCs or substances that fulfil the criteria for SVHCs by non-chemical alternatives;
  - g) asbestos, particularly in recycled materials and objects after preparation for reuse,

This shall be reached through innovation for safe and sustainable by design approaches for chemicals, materials and products and promotion of the phasing out of substances of very high concern or substances that fulfil the criteria for SVHCs.

2. Prevention and Reduction of the impact on the environment or human health of chemical production and use across the value chain to promote in particular at least one of the following:
  - a) the development of green and digital/smart technologies;
  - b) advanced materials;
  - c) low-carbon and low environmental impact industrial production and use of chemicals.
3. Digital innovations for advanced tools, methods and models, and data analysis capacities to also move away from animal testing.
4. Implementation of safe- and sustainable-by-design solutions, including through the development, commercialisation, deployment and uptake of safe- and sustainable-by-design substances, materials and products. The overall sustainability should be ensured by minimising the whole environmental footprint in particular on climate change, resource use, ecosystems and biodiversity from a life cycle perspective.

## 2.6. Industrial Emissions and Safety

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<sup>69</sup> [COM\(2020\) 667 final](#).

<sup>70</sup> Substances identified as having a chronic effect for human health or the environment (*inter alia* Candidate list in REACH and Annex VI to the CLP Regulation).

Priorities will be given to proposals focusing on one of the following:

1. Addressing the application of **pollution prevention and abatement techniques** – including through reuse – referred to in the Industrial Emissions Directive as emerging techniques or development and application of pollution prevention and abatement techniques, which could qualify as candidate emerging techniques under the Industrial Emissions Directive's Best Available Techniques Reference Documents – BREFs – review process. Projects will focus on the reduction of air pollutants – addressing notably PM<sub>2.5</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, NH<sub>3</sub> and/or NMVOCs – and of methane, raw materials, water or energy used by industrial installations regulated by the Industrial Emissions Directive.
2. Facilitating the implementation of the Seveso III Directive<sup>71</sup> on the **control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances** through deployment of particularly cost-effective methodological tools for carrying out human health and environmental risk mapping, and for addressing domino effects. Projects shall foresee the demonstrative application of these tools by different duty holders and implement risk preventing or reducing measures on their basis.

## 2.7. A New European Bauhaus

The following proposals that contribute to the implementation of the [New European Bauhaus](#) are given priority:

1. Proposals focused on a holistic reduction<sup>72</sup> of environmental impacts of new buildings and urbanisation while promoting social inclusion, in a wide sustainability perspective;
2. Proposals focused on reducing the environmental impact at the building stock level by reducing the demand for new buildings. At the same time proposals should, provide the requested functions by citizens and apply different kinds of sufficiency measures such as making use of currently un/under-occupied buildings as well as prioritising renovation, repair and maintenance over demolition and new construction;
3. Proposals aimed at increasing the sustainability of fashion while meeting demands related to aesthetics and inclusivity;
4. Proposals on circular districts involving creation of circular value chains to boost urban economies whilst producing urban and territorial regeneration and/or resilience to climate change effects;
5. Proposals for maintaining or restoring biodiversity that contribute to the implementation of the New European Bauhaus initiative, including through nature-based solutions. This may include, for example, demonstrating biodiversity friendly practices for the energetic isolation of buildings, innovative architectural and urbanisation approaches for wildlife-friendly buildings, climate-proof architecture and urbanisation, etc.

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<sup>71</sup> [Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, amending and subsequently repealing Council Directive 96/82/EC.](#)

<sup>72</sup> Considering aspects such as life cycle approach and green procurement.

### Scope — Activities that can be funded

The present Call topic targets **Standard Action Projects (SAP)** aimed at achieving the objectives of the Circular Economy and Quality of Life sub-programme. SAP are defined **in section 2 of the call document (Type of Action)** while the **general objectives** of the sub-programme **in section 1 ('Circular Economy and Quality of Life')**.

**SAP focussing exclusively on environmental governance are excluded from this Call topic and covered by the related Call topic named LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV-GOV.**

Third countries associated to the LIFE Programme: The assessment of each proposal will be done in line with the provisions of the relevant association agreement.

### Expected impact

Applicants are expected to define, calculate, explain and achieve the expected impacts as described in the Award criterion 'Impact' (see section 9).

All LIFE proposals will have to report on their expected outputs and impacts taking into account the LIFE project indicators (LPI). These LPIs will contribute to evaluating the impact of the LIFE proposals on an environmental but also socio-economic level (e.g. via actions impacting the local economy and population).

Applicants should review relevant indicators in Part C of the eGrant application and complete them with the estimated impact of the project. Part C data should be coherent with the description of impacts of section 2 of Part B of the Application Form.

In case Part C does not include impact indicators that are important for your project (e.g.: NOx emission reduction in case of Air quality projects) you should make use of the indicator "Other project specific KPIs" in Part C and provide a relevant description of such indicators in section 2 of Part B of the Application Form.

If relevant, projects must upload a Geographic Information System (GIS) file and associated data of the specific geographical area where the intervention took place as a deliverable in their final report. This map should enable to spatially visualise the impact already reported in the LIFE Project Indicators database. The specific format and technical requirements of the GIS files will be provided to the supported projects during their implementation. In addition, LIFE projects are encouraged to make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS for satellites-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services.

More detailed LIFE Project Indicators database information will be requested during the project implementation time.

### Funding rate

Standard Action Projects (SAPs) — Maximum 60% funding rate.

In case you have a co-financier contribution, kindly upload the related signed declaration among the optional annexes.

## **LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV-GOV — Environmental Governance**

### Objectives

The aim is to facilitate the transition toward a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy, a toxic-free environment and at protecting, restoring and improving the quality of the environment in line with the European Green Deal and recent policy developments.

The **specific objective** is to cover one or more of the following topics as fully defined **in section 2 of the Call document**:

1. Activities in support of public administrations' decision-making and voluntary approaches for the public and the private sector
2. Environmental compliance assurance and access to justice
3. Behavioural change and awareness-raising initiatives

Please note that the assessment of the extent to which the project is in line with the specific priorities of the call (part of Award criterion 1) will be done **exclusively on the basis of the topics identified and described under section 'Compliance with LIFE programme objectives and call topic' of the Standard application form.** Please also note **that a maximum of two sub-topics shall be selected** (e.g: "Activities in support of public administration (...) private sector" AND "Behavioural change (...) initiatives") **and only those will be considered in the evaluation.**

#### *1. ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS' DECISION-MAKING AND VOLUNTARY APPROACHES FOR THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR*

Priority will be given to project proposals directed to:

1. Improve the capacity of public administration to manage, monitor and/or assess complex initiatives, while structuring, where relevant, institutional collaboration at different territorial level and/or partnership with private entities and promoting a holistic vision of the environment. This should be done with a view to develop synergies, to reduce administrative burden and/or to optimise environmental outcomes which promote an approach of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development towards the 2030 Agenda Framework<sup>73</sup>. Proposals shall target one or more of the following:
  - a) Plans, programmes, initiatives, analyses, reviews and assessments
    - National air pollution control programmes<sup>74</sup>;
    - Air Roadmaps and Air Quality Plans<sup>75</sup>;
    - Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans with the primary objective to reduce substantially air pollution and/or noise;

<sup>73</sup> OECD Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, promoting the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an integrated and coherent set, addressing interactions between economic, social and environmental goals in a balanced manner, while avoiding negative effects on the wellbeing of people here and now, elsewhere and later.

<sup>74</sup> [Directive 2016/2284/EU on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants.](#)

<sup>75</sup> [Directive \(EU\) 2024/2881 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe \(recast\).](#)

- Programmes of measures, analyses and reviews associated with the River Basin Management Plans;
- Noise Action Plans<sup>76</sup>;
- Flood Risk Management Plans<sup>77</sup>;
- Nitrate Action Plans<sup>78</sup>;
- Waste Management Plans and Waste Prevention Programmes;
- National or Regional Circular Economy Action Plans, Strategies, Roadmaps or similar<sup>79</sup>;
- National or Regional Plastics Action Plans, Strategies, Roadmaps or similar<sup>80</sup>;
- National or Regional Sustainable Development Action Plans, Strategies, Roadmaps or similar, in particular those which also integrate or create synergies with the other documents mentioned under this point;
- Actions, Measures and Plans to implement the Green City Accord<sup>81</sup>;
- National Radon Action Plans<sup>82</sup>;

and/or

b) EU Decisions related to:

- industrial emissions;
- waste management;
- water pollution and water abstraction<sup>83</sup>.

2. Development of approaches to promote, implement and/or harmonise one or more of the following voluntary instruments aiming at reducing the environmental impact of entities' activities, products and services:

a) Product environmental footprint category rules (PEFCRs) and/or organisation environmental footprint sectoral rules (OEFSTRs) at

<sup>76</sup> [Directive 2002/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise.](#)

<sup>77</sup> [Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks](#)

<sup>78</sup> [Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources](#)

<sup>79</sup> Such Plans, Strategies, Roadmaps or similar shall be officially approved, include specific and measurable actions, or targets, with a clear timetable and be in line with or complement the objectives of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan.

<sup>80</sup> Such Plans, Strategies, Roadmaps or similar shall be officially approved, include specific and measurable actions, or targets, with a clear timetable and be in line with or complement the objectives of the EU Plastics Strategy.

<sup>81</sup> Under the Green City Accord, EU Local authorities commit to making their cities, greener, cleaner and healthier by achieving the following five goals by 2030: 1) A significant improvement in air quality, 2) important progress in improving water quality and efficiency of water use, 3) considerable progress in conserving and enhancing urban biodiversity, 4) significant improvement in the management of municipal waste, reduction in waste generation and landfilling, increase in re-use, repair and recycling thereby advancing the Circular Economy, 5) a significant reduction in noise pollution.

<sup>82</sup> [Council Directive 2013/59/EURATOM, of 5 December 2013, laying down basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionising radiation.](#)

<sup>83</sup> Including the analysis necessary to establish effective water pricing policies.

European level for products and sectors not yet covered by the existing PEFCRs/OEFSRs and related high-quality data bases, based on the latest available version of the European environmental footprint methods<sup>84</sup> and the latest available guidance<sup>85</sup>.

- b) The EU Ecolabel<sup>86</sup>, for the promotion of products (goods and services) with excellent environmental performance, in all sectors concerned and in particular in tourism and personal care sectors, and as a tool to promote sustainable consumption patterns and lifestyles. Provision of support to increase the EU Ecolabel uptake by industry, including SMEs. This can include awareness raising campaigns, networking, education, training of trainers etc. In a broader perspective, fostering the use of credible environmental ecolabels<sup>87</sup>.
- c) Actions, services, networks and innovative business models for fostering the use of reused, repaired, refurbished, remanufactured products also linked to product durability and planned obsolescence<sup>88</sup>.
- d) Development and implementation of indicators linked to product policy and monitoring of implementation of Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation<sup>89</sup> (ESPR).
- e) Green and Circular Public Procurement<sup>90</sup> through common tender specifications and/or uptake monitoring tools for public authorities with similar purchasing needs, in order to foster uptake. The option of making public procurement green compulsory should be considered, as enabled through ESPR.
- f) Communication, promotion and uptake of the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) with an aim to reduce the environmental footprint of the public and private sector, including SMEs, by registering to EMAS<sup>52</sup>. This can include support to advisory services for companies, promotion campaigns, training for potential beneficiaries and awareness raising on the benefits of the scheme.
- g) Assessment and reporting of the sustainability performance of buildings<sup>91</sup>, using Level(s), the building framework with core indicators<sup>92</sup>.

<sup>84</sup> Commission Recommendation of 9 April 2013 on the use of common methods to measure and communicate the life cycle environmental performance of products and organizations. See also [https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/PEF\\_method.pdf](https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/PEF_method.pdf) and [https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/OEF\\_method.pdf](https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/OEF_method.pdf).

<sup>85</sup> <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/wikis/display/EUENVFP/Documents+of+common+interest>. The development of PEFCRs and OEFSRs has to respect processes established at EU level for developing them. Projects will only be accepted if there are open opportunities (e.g. calls for volunteers/expression of interest) for the development of PEFCRs/OEFSRs. See [https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/PEF\\_method.pdf](https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/PEF_method.pdf).

<sup>85</sup> Commission Recommendation of 9 April 2013 on the use of common methods to measure and communicate the life cycle environmental performance of products and organizations. See also [https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/PEF\\_method.pdf](https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/PEF_method.pdf) and [https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/OEF\\_method.pdf](https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/OEF_method.pdf).

<sup>85</sup> The development of PEFCRs and OEFSRs has to respect processes established at EU level for developing them. Projects will only be accepted if there are open opportunities (e.g. calls for volunteers/expression of interest).

<sup>86</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/>.

<sup>87</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/useful-links.html>.

<sup>88</sup> E.g. with a usage counter, a reduced VAT for repair, extension of the legal guarantee, etc.

<sup>89</sup> [Directive 2009/125/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for energy-related products \(recast\).](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32009L0125)

<sup>90</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm).

<sup>91</sup> [http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Efficient\\_Buildings/](http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Efficient_Buildings/).

<sup>92</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/topics/circular-economy/levels\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/topics/circular-economy/levels_en).

3. Implementation of innovative solutions in the private and/or public sectors for addressing zero pollution based on:
  - a) Modelling and forecasting tools for air pollution and/or water pollution.
  - b) Use of innovative data management related to air, noise, water, marine, soil and industrial emissions, for example innovative use of sensors, artificial intelligence, as well as the European satellite monitoring system (Copernicus) or other forms of earth observation.
4. Actions targeted at the implementation of proactive drought management, including the exchange of experience on drought risk management in the EU, capacity building and dialogue through the European and Global Drought Observatories of the Copernicus Emergency Management Service.

## 2. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Projects supporting environmental compliance assurance and access to justice have a priority if they aim at:

1. establishing new or, where in place, enhancing existing cross-border, national or regional networks of environmental compliance assurance practitioners<sup>93</sup> or experts; and/or establishing or, where in place, improving professional qualifications and training<sup>94</sup> to improve compliance with binding EU environmental instruments (other than on nature and biodiversity), through promoting, checking and enforcing compliance, and applying the polluter pays principle, using a mix of administrative law, criminal law and environmental liability<sup>95</sup>; and/or
2. developing and implementing strategies<sup>96</sup> and policies and/or developing and using innovative tools and actions to promote<sup>97</sup>, monitor<sup>98</sup> and enforce compliance with binding EU environmental instruments (other than on nature and biodiversity), and ensure application of the polluter pays principles through environmental liability; and/or

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<sup>93</sup> Environmental compliance assurance practitioners can include those working for authorities and bodies with compliance assurance responsibilities such as local, regional, police and customs authorities, environment agencies and inspectorates, supreme public audit bodies and the judiciary. They can also include non-governmental organisations and academics and researchers specialised in one or more aspects of compliance assurance.

<sup>94</sup> Projects should ensure the academic credentials of the qualifications and training and maximise the potential of information technology through means such as webinars and massive open online courses (MOOCs) to allow distance learning reach as many practitioners as cost-effectively as possible.

They should draw on existing modules and know-how in the area of environmental law training developed by the Commission and the Commission Notice on access to justice in environmental matters and related materials. See [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/law/training\\_package.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/law/training_package.htm).

<sup>95</sup> See in particular the [Environmental Liability Directive, Directive 2004/35/EC](#) on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage, OJL 143, 30.4.2004, p. 56–75.

<sup>96</sup> Strategies and policies are aimed at high-level organisation of activities and interventions, especially risk-based ones.

<sup>97</sup> Promotion systems and techniques could involve the use of guidance, advisory services, awareness-raising campaigns, partnership agreements, or self-monitoring systems that assist duty-holders to comply.

<sup>98</sup> Monitoring systems and techniques could relate to site inspections, surveillance (including through use of satellites and drones), spot checks, intelligence-gathering, industry analysis, police investigation, data analysis and environmental audits. Follow-up and enforcement techniques can have a similarly wide coverage.

3. engaging with citizens and others<sup>99</sup> to promote and monitor compliance<sup>100</sup>, and to contribute to the application of environmental liability<sup>101</sup>.

### 3 BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AND AWARENESS-RAISING INITIATIVES

Priority is given to proposals presenting substantial evidence that a change of awareness levels<sup>102</sup> in the field(s) addressed by the project is a crucial factor supporting correct implementation and/or future development of EU environmental policies tools and/or legislation in a wider sustainability perspective. The awareness-raising activities should have the widest coverage relevant for the specific issue targeted<sup>103</sup>. The environmental problems, EU environmental policies, tools and/or legislation targeted should be directly linked to one or more of the priorities included in:

1. The European Green Deal, by raising awareness on environmental impacts, in order to underpin transformative change towards more sustainable food, water, energy, mobility and building systems and to mainstream environmental considerations across policies and activities in line with the European Green Deal oath to “do no harm”;
2. The Circular Economy Action Plan which ensures waste prevention and reduction; sustainable production; sustainable products, services and business models; sustainable consumption and transformation of consumption patterns, in particular in the sectors that were identified as key for the transition to a circular economy in the Action Plan, namely electronics and Information and Communication Technologies, batteries and vehicles, packaging, plastics, textiles, construction and buildings, food, water and nutrients. On these topics, proposals should support education, peer-to-peer learning, training, and awareness raising solutions, such as creation of sector-specific training contents and best practices manuals.
3. The Zero Pollution Action Plan addressing the protection of citizens from environmental pressures and risks to health as a result of Europe’s zero-pollution ambition and measures for a toxic-free environment including, in particular, promoting clean air, clean water and clean soil and sustainability in the use and management of chemicals.

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<sup>99</sup> Promoting effective public participation and access to justice in environmental matters amongst the public, NGOs, lawyers, the judiciary, public administrations or other stakeholders with a view to improving knowledge, understanding and application of effective means of public participation and/or access to justice, with a particular focus on protecting people's health and well-being and protecting the quality of the environment via the requirements of EU air, water and waste and environmental liability instruments. See in particular, Commission Communication on Improving Access to justice environmental matters (COM(2020) 64 ) and the Commission Notice on access to justice in environmental matters.

<sup>100</sup> Electronic complaint-handling systems, hot lines, citizen observatories and other citizen science platforms can all facilitate citizen engagement. Citizen science platforms may, amongst other things, allow competent national, regional and local authorities to engage citizens in environmental monitoring.

<sup>101</sup> See VadeMecum on complaint-handling and citizen engagement, adopted by the Environmental Compliance and Governance Forum in 2019, and summary guide for national administrations.

<sup>102</sup> Awareness level is defined here as the proportion of target audience who knows of the idea/term/product/concept/environmental challenge/etc. that is the subject of the proposed LIFE project's work.

<sup>103</sup> As a general principle, these proposals should therefore, e.g. fully target a Member State, several Member States or the entire EU, a whole market sector, a major metropolitan area.



### Scope — Activities that can be funded

The present Call topic targets **Standard Action Projects (SAP)** aimed at achieving the objectives of the Circular Economy and Quality of Life sub-programme. SAP are defined **in section 2 of the call document (Type of Action)** while the **general objectives** of the **sub-programme in section 1 ('Circular Economy and Quality of Life')**.

**This call topic focus exclusively on environmental governance projects, other projects as defined in the related Call topic named LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV-ENVIRONMENT as well as LIFE-2025-SAP-NAT-GOV are excluded.**

Third countries associated to the LIFE Programme: The assessment of each proposal will be done in line with the provisions of the relevant association agreement.

### Expected impact

Applicants are expected to define, calculate, explain and achieve the expected impacts as described in the Award criterion 'Impact' (see section 9).

All LIFE proposals will have to report on their expected outputs and impacts taking into account the LIFE project indicators (LPIs). These LPIs will contribute to evaluating the impact of the LIFE proposals on an environmental but also socio-economic level (e.g. via actions impacting the local economy and population).

Applicants should review relevant indicators in Part C of the eGrant application and complete them with the estimated impact of the project. Part C data should be coherent with the description of impacts of section 2 of Part B of the Application Form.

In case Part C does not include impact indicators that are important for your project (e.g.: NOx emission reduction in case of Air quality projects) you should make use of the indicator "Other project specific *KPIs*" in Part C and provide a relevant description of such indicators in section 2 of Part B of the Application Form.

If relevant, projects must upload a Geographic Information System (GIS) file and associated data of the specific geographical area where the intervention took place as a deliverable in their final report. This map should enable to spatially visualise the impact already reported in the LIFE Project Indicators database. The specific format and technical requirements of the GIS files will be provided to the supported projects during their implementation. In addition, LIFE projects are encouraged to make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS for satellites-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services.

More detailed LIFE Project Indicators database information will be requested during the project implementation time.

### Funding rate

Standard Action Projects (SAPs) — Maximum 60% funding rate.

In case you have a co-financier contribution, kindly upload the related signed declaration among the optional annexes.

### 3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is **EUR 81,000,000** .

Specific budget information per topic can be found in the table below:

Topic	Topic budget	Indicative range of project budgets	Estimated number of projects to be funded
LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV-ENVIRONMENT - Circular Economy and Zero Pollution	<b>EUR 77,000,000</b>  <b>(of which EUR 4,000,000 for Bauhaus sub-topic)</b>	<b>EUR 2-10 Mln</b>	30 projects
LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV-GOV — Environment governance	<b>EUR 4,000,000</b>	<b>EUR 0,7 - 2 Mln</b>	3/4 projects

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines(indicative)	
Call opening:	24 April 2025
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>23 September 2025 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Information on evaluation results:	February/March 2026
GA signature:	May/June 2026

### 5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Calls for proposals](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

**⚠ Please note that not using the correct template or not complying with the instructions therein (e.g font size limit, deletion of instructions, etc) may lead to the inadmissibility of your proposal. Furthermore, to ensure a proper evaluation of your project the appropriate sections of the template must be filled in depending on whether the call has one or two submission stages. For stage 1 (concept note), some sections are not applicable (noted as n/a); for stage 2 (full proposal), all sections must be completed.**

**Project acronym** — Your project acronym must include the word LIFE.

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)

**⚠** In order to ensure a proper evaluation of your project, please click on the “?” sign appearing in each screen and carefully check the instructions to correctly fill the different sections.

- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Part C — contains additional project data and the project’s contribution to EU programme key performance indicators (*to be filled in directly online*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
  - detailed budget table
  - participant information
- **optional annexes:**
  - Letters of support
  - Maps
  - Description of sites
  - Description of species and habitats (N/A)
  - Activity Annual report (N/A)
  - Other annexes (for example: Lifecycle analysis, Business plans etc.)

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Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.


At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that all participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (*especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc*). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable** (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded).

Proposals are limited to maximum **120 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc*).

 Please be aware that some proposal information may be shared with the LIFE programme committee established under Regulation No [182/2011](#)<sup>104</sup>, i.e. name and country of all applicants (coordinating organisation and partners), project title, total eligible costs, LIFE funding requested, result of the assessment of the admissibility and eligibility of the proposal, and scores by criterion for eligible proposals.

-  For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

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<sup>104</sup> Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission's exercise of implementing powers (OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 13).

## 6. Eligibility

### Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
  - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
  - non-EU countries:
    - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the LIFE Programme ([list of participating countries](#))<sup>105</sup>
- the coordinator must be established in an eligible country

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

#### *Specific cases and definitions*

Exceptional funding — Entities from other countries (not listed above) are exceptionally eligible, if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action (*see work programme*).

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons<sup>106</sup>.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>107</sup>. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations for participating in the programme (*see list of participating countries above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are

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<sup>105</sup> Applicants from countries which have requested to be associated to the LIFE Programme may participate in this call for proposals. However, no grant agreement will be signed if the association agreement is not entered into force by the end of the selection procedure.

<sup>106</sup> See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

<sup>107</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

concluded before grant signature and if the association covers the call (i.e. is retroactive and covers both the part of the programme and the year when the call was launched).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)<sup>108</sup>. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092<sup>109</sup>. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc). Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain (see [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/2506](#), as of 16 December 2022).

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

### **Consortium composition**

n/a

### **Eligible activities**

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which they are submitted.

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc*). Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g. activities involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc*)<sup>110</sup>.

Financial support to third parties is allowed in LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV-ENVIRONMENT - Circular Economy and Zero Pollution and LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV-GOV — Environment governance for grants or similar forms of support and prizes under the following conditions:

- the calls must be open, published widely and conform to EU standards concerning transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality

Financial support to third parties will be accepted in projects which aim to assist entities outside the project partnership (*e.g. non-profit organisations, local authorities or citizens groups*) in the implementation or development of local initiatives that will contribute to the project's objectives.

Your project application must clearly specify why financial support to third parties is needed, how it will be managed and provide a list of the different types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support. The proposal must also clearly

<sup>108</sup> Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

<sup>109</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

<sup>110</sup> See, for instance, [Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#).

describe the results to be obtained.

### **Geographic location (target countries)**

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*). Activities outside the eligible countries must be necessary to achieve the EU environmental and climate objectives and ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried within the eligible countries (e.g. actions aimed at the conservation of migratory birds in wintering areas, actions implemented on a trans boundary river, or projects aimed to address environmental problems that cannot be solved successfully or efficiently unless actions are carried out also in non-eligible countries).

## **7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion**

### **Financial capacity**

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc.*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all coordinators except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the project requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

- propose no prefinancing
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

## Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the Resources award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants (and previous projects, if any).

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

## Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>111</sup>:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>112</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decisionmaking or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation,

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<sup>111</sup> See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

<sup>112</sup> 'Professional misconduct' includes, in particular, the following: violation of ethical standards of the profession; wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility; breach of generally accepted professional ethical standards; false declarations/misrepresentation of information; participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition; violation of IPR; attempting to influence decision-making processes by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interests, or to obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage; incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence or similar activities contrary to the EU values where negatively affecting or risking to affect the performance of a legal commitment.



decisionmaking or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)

- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decisionmaking or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted<sup>113</sup> an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that<sup>114</sup>:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

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<sup>113</sup> 'Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

<sup>114</sup> See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

## 8. Evaluation and award procedure


The proposals will have to follow the **standard submission and evaluation procedure** (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

An **evaluation committee** (assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic or budget envelope) a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order, the *ex aequo* proposals will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Impact'. If these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Relevance', then 'Quality', then 'Resources'.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected. Proposals that are below the budget threshold (i.e. passed, but not ranked high enough to receive funding) will be awarded a [Seal of Excellence](#).

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

**Grant preparation** will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Full compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (*see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)*). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

## 9. Award criteria

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

### 1. Relevance (0-20 points)

- Relevance to the objectives of the targeted LIFE sub-programme and to the specific priorities of the call for proposals and, when relevant, topic description
- Concept and methodology: soundness of the overall intervention logic
- Extent to which the proposal offers co-benefits and promotes synergies with other policy areas relevant for achieving environment and climate policy objectives

### 2. Impact (0-20 points)

- Ambition and credibility of impacts expected during and/or after the project due to the activities, including ensuring that no substantial harm is done to the other specific objectives of the LIFE Programme
- Sustainability of the project results after the end of the project and quality of the measures for the exploitation of project results
- Potential for the project results to be replicated in the same or other sectors or places, or to be up-scaled by public or private actors or through mobilising larger investments or financial resources (catalytic potential).

### 3. Quality (0-20 points)

- Clarity, relevance and feasibility of the work plan; appropriate geographic focus of the activities
- Identification and mobilisation of the relevant stakeholders
- Quality of the plan to monitor and report impacts
- Appropriateness and quality of the measures to communicate and disseminate the project and its results to different target groups

### 4. Resources (0-20 points)

- Composition of the project team - in terms of expertise, skills and responsibilities and appropriateness of the management structure
- Appropriateness of the budget and resources and their consistency with the work plan
- Transparency of the budget, i.e. the cost items should be sufficiently described
- Extent to which the project environmental impact is considered and mitigated, including through the use of green procurement. The use of recognised methods for the calculation of the project environmental footprint (e.g. Project Environmental Footprint (PEF) or Organizational Environmental Footprint (OEF) methods or similar ones<sup>115</sup>) or environmental management systems (e.g. Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)) would be an asset
- Value for money of the proposal

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<sup>115</sup> See list on [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/PEFCR\\_OEFSR\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/PEFCR_OEFSR_en.htm).

**Bonus points:**

- **Bonus 1:** The proposal offers exceptional synergies and promotes significant co-benefits between LIFE sub-programmes. (2 points).
- **Bonus 2:** The proposal is primarily implemented in the Outermost Regions. Where specific regional features are relevant to the needs addressed in the call for proposals, *e.g. islands for waste, coal-intensive regions for clean energy, etc.*, the bonus could be extended to other geographical areas with specific needs and vulnerabilities (2 points).
- **Bonus 3:** The proposal substantially builds on or up-scales the results of other EU funded projects. (2 points).
- **Bonus 4:** The proposal offers an exceptional catalytic potential. (2 points).
- **Bonus 5:** The proposal envisages a transnational cooperation among eligible countries essential to guarantee the achievement of the project objectives. (2 points).

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score	Weighting
Relevance	10	20	1
Impact	10	20	1.5
Quality	10	20	1
Resources	10	20	1
<b>Overall weighted (pass) scores (without bonus)</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>90</b>	N/A
Bonus 1	n/a	2	1
Bonus 2	n/a	2	1
Bonus 3	n/a	2	1
Bonus 4	n/a	2	1
Bonus 5	n/a	2	1
<b>Overall weighted (pass) scores (with bonus)</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>90 to 100</b>	N/A

Maximum points (full proposals): 90 to 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion (full proposals): 10/20, 10/20, 10/20 and 10/20 points (before weighting).

Overall threshold (full proposals): 55 points (after weighting).

## 10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

### Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: between 24 and 120 months indicatively (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

### Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

### Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (requested grant amount): *see section 3 above*.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement (maximum **60%**).


Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Please note that the maximum grant amount for each beneficiary will be fixed in the Grant Agreement. The beneficiaries can however decide to distribute the grant money differently in accordance with what they have agreed in the consortium agreement (*see also section 13*).

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement (*e.g. improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc*).

## Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

 When filling in the summarised budget table (directly online in Application Form Part A), please click on the “?” sign appearing in each screen and carefully check the instructions to correctly fill the different sections.

*Budget categories for this call:*

- A. Personnel costs
  - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
  - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
  - A.5 Volunteers
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
  - C.1 Travel and subsistence
  - C.2 Equipment
  - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories
  - D.1 Financial support to third parties
  - D.2 Land purchase
- E. Indirect costs

*Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:*

- personnel costs:
  - SME owner/natural person unit cost<sup>116</sup>: Yes
  - volunteers unit cost<sup>117</sup>: Yes (without indirect costs)
- travel and subsistence unit cost<sup>118</sup>: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: full cost + depreciation for listed equipment (*— under the special conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (art 6.2.C.2) and linked to special durability clause (use and maintain for 5 years after end of action; annex 5)*)
- other cost categories:
  - costs for financial support to third parties: allowed for grants or similar and prizes; maximum total amount for financial support to third parties EUR 100.000; maximum amount per third party EUR 20.000.
  - land purchase costs: subject to the conditions specified in Art. 6.2 - D.2 Eligible and ineligible costs and contributions of the LIFE General Model


<sup>116</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7115).

<sup>117</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646).

<sup>118</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

Grant Agreement. The applicant must address each of these conditions in his proposal, explaining how each one is met or will be met during the project. Such conditions refer, for example, to the contribution to the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, to the guarantee that in the long term the land will be used consistently with the specific objectives of the LIFE Programme, to the fact that land purchase is the only or most cost-effective way of achieving the desired conservation outcome etc.

- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories (land purchase), if any)
- VAT: non-deductible/non-refundable VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
  - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
  - kick-off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed
  - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible unless duly justified by the project objectives
  - common information and dissemination activities: foresee resources to increase synergies between, and the visibility of LIFE and EU supported actions
  - other ineligible costs: No

 **Volunteers costs** — Volunteers costs are not a classic cost category. There are no costs because volunteers work for free, but they may nonetheless be added to the budget in the form of a prefixed unit cost (per volunteer) and thus allow you to benefit from the volunteers' work for the grant (by increasing the amount of reimbursement up to 100% of the normal costs, i.e. cost categories other than volunteers). More information is available in the [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.A.5](#).

## Reporting and payment arrangements

The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).


After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally **30%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be one or more **additional prefinancing payments** linked to a prefinancing report.

In addition, for longer or more complex projects, you may be expected to submit one or more progress reports not linked to payments.

**Payment of the balance:** At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if you or one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for **keeping records** on all the work done and the costs declared.

### **Prefinancing guarantees**

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement (*art 23*).

### **Certificates**

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

### **Liability regime for recoveries**

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
- unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*



In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

### **Provisions concerning the project implementation**

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5):*

- rights of use on results: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5):*

- communication and dissemination plan: Yes
- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes
- special logos: Yes

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5):*

- durability: Yes
- specific rules for blending operations: No

### **Other specificities**

Consortium agreement: Yes

#### *Non-compliance and breach of contract*

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).



For more information, see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

## 11. How to submit an application

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a **2-step process**:

### a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EULogin account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

### b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Calls for proposals](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 4 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Part C containing additional project data. To be filled in directly online.
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System, otherwise the proposal may be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

## 12. Help

As far as possible, ***please try to find the answers you need yourself***, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):


- [Online Manual](#)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).
- [LIFE website FAQs](#)
- [LIFE Info Days](#)

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

### Contact

Only in case you did not find an answer in the above links, you may contact:

- for individual questions on the Portal Submission System: [IT Helpdesk](#)
- for non-IT related questions: [CINEA-LIFE-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu](mailto:CINEA-LIFE-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu).

 Please send your questions at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline (see *section 4*) AND indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (see *cover page*).

## 13. Important



### IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc.*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.  

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.
- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No cumulation of funding/no double funding** — It is strictly prohibited to cumulate funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions'). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants; projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (*see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)*).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded funding for them).  
Organisations may participate in several proposals.  
BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they will be rejected).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be rejected. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application.

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).